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TITLE: Gulf War Illness – Evaluation of an Innovative Detoxification Program

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14. ABSTRACT This project is to determine whether a widely used detoxification protocol that utilizes exercise, sauna therapy and crystalline niacin with supplements will reduce the symptoms of Gulf War Illness (GWI). The program will study 50 GWI veterans, with 25 serving as an initial control but then provided the detoxification program after a delay. All subjects will answer a questionnaire, be given a series of psychological and neurobehavioral tests, and provide blood samples for clinical chemistry analysis before and after undergoing the detoxification program. The GWI veterans will be studied at several time points, before the detoxification, immediately after and three months after completing the program. The goal of the study is to determine whether this method of detoxification results in reduction of the symptoms of GWI. Because of delays in obtaining human subjects approval, this project has only recently begun. All final IRB and DOD approvals were received in late 2013. However we have not yet received funding for the second and third years, and all funds from year 1 have been expended while waiting for DOD approvals. In anticipation of the funding coming soon, we have begun and have recruited a total of eight Gulf War Illness veterans.					
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Progress to Date:

This project was seriously delayed primarily because of waiting for DOD final approvals. The final approval from DOD came literally at the end of the 3-year grant period. But by then we had expended all of the first year funding because we had hired and trained staff so as to be ready to begin the study, since final approval had been expected much earlier. However when the final DOD approval was obtained, the funding for years 2 and 3 was not provided, and still has not been provided. Because we were assured that it was coming soon, we used other funds to begin the study. To date we have recruited eight Gulf War Illness veterans who meet the criteria of the study, and two of them have completed the program. However all of the other flexible funding has been exhausted and if we do not receive the remaining two years of funding very soon this project will not be able to proceed.

In spite of these problems, which are hopefully almost over, our preliminary results are extremely positive, based on the testimonials of the Gulf War Illness veterans that have completed the program and even those who are still in the program. In fact these persons have become our best recruitment advocates, and continue to recommend others who suffer from Gulf War Illness to our office. Those who have completed the program report less pain, more mobility, requiring fewer medications and feeling that their quality of life has improved as a result of the detoxification program. Obviously we have too few persons who have finished the program for us to have evaluated the cognitive and quality of life function test results which all subjects took before beginning the program, then again seven days and three months after having completed the detoxification procedure.

Key Research Accomplishments:

The project has finally begun, and the preliminary testimonials from Gulf War Illness veterans who have completed the program are very positive.

Reportable Outcomes:

None at the present time.

Conclusion:

We have finally overcome several obstacles, but urgently need the funding for years 2 and 3 in order to be able to continue the study.